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Our Paris Embassy Linked to "L'Affaire Dides"

The Plot to Smear Mendes-France

The *"Affair Dides,"* now the sensation of French politics, has two main aspects. One is how and to what extent military secrets were leaked to the Communists. The answers must await the outcome of the current investigation. The other, hardly covered by the press here at all, concerns the alleged links between the U.S. Embassy in Paris and undercover French rightist elements feeding false information to American intelligence in order to poison Franco-American relations and to obtain American aid in overturning Mendès-France.

The October 2 issue of *L'Express*, a French liberal weekly close to the Mendès-France government, cites two instances of such false information. It says the American government was given a dossier on a member of the government who bears the same name, but is not related to, a well-known "*progressiste*" (fellow traveller). *L'Express* declares that information about the Leftist was given as if it were about the government official with the same name. Another example *L'Express* cites concerns an official sent on an important mission to Asia who encountered an unexpected hostility on the part of Washington. *L'Express* says it has just been discovered that the dossier on him which was furnished to the Americans was made up in large part of information about a business man linked to a Soviet bank who before the war had for a time been allied by marriage to this official's family.

Apparently Senator Wiley had been getting information of this kind on his trip. *L'Express* says an American Senator who came to Paris at the end of September had among his papers a memorandum about the Mendès-France government which described as "communisants" (Communist sympathizers) the three Ministers, General Koenig, and MM. Chaban-Delmas and Lemaire, who resigned on the eve of the Brussels conference rather than accept the E.D.C. in any shape or form. All three are followers of de Gaulle. "These neo-Cagoulards," *L'Express* says of the informants, "have for a long time so filled up our American friends with falsehoods as to create a veritable cancer of mistrust between France and America." The name applied recalls the Fascist "Cagoulards" (Hooded Men) who menaced the French Republic before the war.

"The New Cagoule"

L'Express asserts that the "new Cagoule" is made up of politicians whose careers are based on a demagogic anti-communism, of police officials whose record was stained during the German occupation, and of financial interests which have their base in North Africa. *L'Express* says that "under the cover of anti-communism" this group has built up a network in intelligence and counter-espionage calculated to keep it in power, or to recover power very quickly. In the same issue, the Academician, Francois Mauriac, one of the leading French Catholic writers of this generation, links the attack on Mendès-France not only with pre-war Fascist elements but with certain groups in the M.R.P., the Catholic party which lost its postwar monopoly of the Foreign Office when Mendès-France came to power.

One of the main elements of the plot against Mendès-France was to make it appear that leaks to the Communists began when he took office. *L'Express* says it was only through the accident of the arrest of the police official Dides that the government learned of the leaks which had occurred previously. "Actually," *L'Express* declares, "neither the Ministry of the Interior of the Laniel government, nor the Ministry of National Defense, nor the Prefect of Police had breathed a word to their successors of the investigation which was underway into these earlier leaks and the dossiers on the subject had disappeared."

In the meantime, copies were widely circulated in political circles of a report alleged to have been made by M. Duclos to the Politbureau of the French Communist party which included the minutes of a National Defense Committee meeting. An important member of Parliament called in friendly newspapermen and told them that since M. Mitterand became Minister of the Interior under Mendès-France defense secrets had leaked to the Communists. "A high personage declared before several witnesses," *L'Express* says, "that Mendès-France and Mitterand must be brought to trial." The scandal was supposed to break on the eve of the London conference and compromise the government, but plans were upset by the arrest of M. Dides, with the alleged report by M. Duclos in his possession.

The OSS Saves Dides

Much interesting additional information is supplied by the latest issue of Claude Bourdet's weekly, *L'Observateur*, to arrive here. The issue of September 30 carries a lengthy article, "The Truth About the Dides Affair," which provides sketches of both M. Dides and M. Baranès, the Communist journalist, who was his informer. M. Dides, according to *L'Observateur*, "worked at the headquarters of General Intelligence, of sinister memory" during the occupation and would have been purged if he had not presented an affidavit from the OSS saying that he had played a "double game" under the Germans. After his own "clearance," M. Dides devoted a large part of his leisure time to the defense of his purged colleeagues. His assignment in recent years had been to "special investigations," i.e. *L'Observateur* says, "to investigations concerning Communists and certain politicians opposed to the government then in power."

When arrested, M. Dides let friendly newspapermen know

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Must Teachers Become Informers to Keep Their Jobs? . . .

New York—The New York *Herald Tribune* applauded, no paper in New York protested, the dismissal of three Associate Professors at Hunter College who admitted that they had been Communists but refused to inform on others. They pleaded "conscience" but the *Herald Tribune* (Oct. 2) agreed with the Board of Higher Education "that no subordinate can substitute his private judgment for that of the superior." This has the full flavor of the older medieval and the newer totalitarian inquisitions.

Must teachers become informers to keep their jobs? This is the question being decided in New York. New York's example will affect the whole country. The Board of Education is split on the question and Dr. William Jansen, the superintendent of schools, who began the Red hunt in 1949, "has taken the position that a teacher's refusal to name others does not, by itself, constitute grounds for disciplinary action" (*N. Y. Times*, Sept. 18).

The balance of forces in the Board of Education may be upset by the Hunter College cases. The Trial Committee report to the Board of *Higher* Education, which runs the city colleges, said "the precedents now to be established . . . will outlast these particular cases." The Board of Higher Education by voting to dismiss has ruled as did the Holy Office four and a half centuries ago.

The Penitent Had to Inform

Lea tells us in his classic history of the Spanish Inquisition (Vol. II, pps. 577-8), "One of the most essential requisites to completeness of confession was the denunciation of all accomplices—that is, of all whom the penitent knew to be heretics or addicted to heretical practices." The inquisitor was ordered when anyone confessed "to examine him exhaustively as to what he knew of his parents, brothers, kindred and all other persons." This was entered in registers, alphabetically indexed, like the records of our House Un-American and Jenner committees, for the use of the inquisitorial tribunals.

The effect was to dissolve the fabric of mutual confidence and elementary decency binding man to man. "There was usually," Lea relates, "little hesitation on the part of the penitent to incriminate his family and friends, for they might, for all he knew, be themselves under trial and informing on him, so that any reticence on his part exposed him to the danger of being a *diminuto* with all its fateful consequences." A *diminuto* was a penitent who held back from full disclosure. Then the penalty was the stake, today the ruin of one's academic career.

The very language of the Trial Committee report resembles that of a Torquemada—or a Vishinsky, denouncing "deviationists," as in the purge trials of the 30's. The report says of the refusal to inform "The purpose and effect were to continue to shield from surgery this malignant cell in the body of the Hunter College faculty and to allow its membership and virus to continue activity undetected." This view of a heretical group as "malignant" and of heretical views as a "virus," threatening to infect the body ecclessiastical or politic, is the language of closed societies, of overheated minds and fearfully hating spirits.

Did He Fear Bella Dodd?

In this atmosphere to confess without informing is to render oneself suspect. Perhaps fearing that he had already been named by his old friend, Dr. Bella Dodd, Professor V. Jerauld McGill, who taught philosophy at Hunter, testified before an executive session of the Senate Internal Security subcommittee on September 24, 1952, that he had been a Communist. He admitted that he had testified falsely when he denied party membership to the New York State Rapp-Coudert investigating committee in 1941. He wrote out a long statement abjuring and denouncing Communism. But he declined to name others.

The Senate committee did not make an issue of this. But later under constant pressure from Board of Higher Education investigators, McGill prevailed on two colleagues, Louis Weisner, who taught mathematics, and Charles W. Hughes, who taught music, to come forward and admit they, too, had been Communists. The three declined to name others. All three were suspended without pay.

The conduct of the three dismissed professors is contrasted with that of Dr. Bella Dodd, who helped form the Hunter College unit, but "had openly recanted and had confessed her associations . . ." The language again is medieval—the duty is to "recant" the noxious doctrines and to "confess . . . associations," i.e. to inform.

Heresy Oft Goes With Witchcraft

Nefarious practices are hinted at, for heresy oft goes hand in hand with witchcraft. "The evidence is overwhelming," the report says, "that his [Professor V. Jerauld McGill's] secret group of Communists first in Greenwich Village and in 1938 at Hunter College had purposes quite other and more sinister than those of a study group discussing current events. . . ."

What these "quite other and more sinister" purposes were, or just what the "overwhelming" evidence of them was, is nowhere to be found in the hundred pages of the Trial Report. The Report does unearth from book reviews by the accused when they were Communists in the 30's some attacks on Dewey, Herman Levy, Haldane and Einstein which are squarely in the tradition of that cast-iron dogmatism which passes for Marxism in the Communist movement.

This silly stuff serves no purpose more sinister than self-exposure. It does not tell us what the Hunter College study group was suspected of doing. This is left vague, but a diabolic cleverness is imputed. "Testimony by outsiders that they knew of no objective efforts at indoctrination in the classroom," the Trial Committee said, "is of little practical weight." A Salem court might as lightly have dismissed testimony that none of the crones before it had been seen travelling by broomstick.

Douglas Was Prophetic

"The very threat of such a procedure is certain to raise havoc with academic freedom. Youthful indiscretions, mistaken causes, misguided enthusiasms—all long forgotten—become the ghosts of a harrowing present. . . .

"Once a teacher's connection with a listed organization is shown, her views become subject to scrutiny to determine whether her membership in the organization is innocent or, if she was formerly a member, whether she has bona fide abandoned her membership. The law inevitably turns the school system into a spying project.

"Where suspicion fills the air and holds scholars in line for fear of their jobs, there can be no exercise of the free intellect. Supineness and dogmatism take the place of inquiry. A 'party line'—as dangerous as the 'party line' of the Communists—takes hold. It is the 'party line' of the orthodox view, of the conventional thought, of the accepted approach. . . . A deadening dogma takes the place of free inquiry. . . .

—Mr. Justice Douglas dissenting in the Feinberg Law Case

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. . . The Hunter College Dismissals May Set A National Precedent

The authorities cited by the Trial Committee for this ruling show how high and far the paranoid infection has spread in American law. "As the Preamble to the Feinberg Law and the Supreme Court of the United States in *Adler v. Board of Education, 342 U.S. 485, 490,* have both declared, such influences are 'sufficiently subtle to escape detection in the classroom'." So says the Trial Committee report.

When the multiplication table and the elementary speller are often too "subtle" to be impressed on the youthful mind, how do these practitioners of the Marxist-Leninist magic succeed in instilling their more abstruse mysteries? What is this painless intra-venous injection of dialetical materialism into close students of the Yanks and Dodgers?

It is the premise which makes this a witch hunt—the premise that the Communists are men of supernatural powers engaged in a diabolic conspiracy all the more sinister because so vague. Once the premise is accepted, nothing else is of avail. Professor McGill said he left the party in 1941; Professor Weisner that he left in 1949; Professor Hughes that he left in 1941. Would men capable of such deviltries stop at a lie?

Self-Flagellation of No Avail

All three testified at length to their present disgust with the Communist party. "They themselves," as the Trial Committee Report summarized it, "use such terms as 'secrecy from the beginning', 'imprisonment', 'trap', 'narrowness', mental 'inertia', fear of 'reprisal', 'duplicity', 'casuistry', 'concealment', 'lack of candor', 'perjury', 'false names' . . ." This flogging of their dead selves and flagellation of their past opinions was not counted in their favor. Might it not be a mere ruse?

Two fellow Professors at Hunter, Welch and O'Gorman, testified that McGill had denounced the Korean invasion. Professor Richard McKeon of Chicago testified that McGill's articles in *Science and Society* ceased to show a Marxist influence in the middle 'Forties. Professor Houston Peterson of Rutgers testified that two of them were completely non-Marxist. Professor Margeret Spahr of Hunter's Political Science Department, who courageously served as counsel for McGill (along with Ernest Angell), testified as an expert in political theory that the term "Marxist" included non-revolutionary Marxists.

All was turned against him. "The greater his mental and academic attainments," was the Trial Committee's comment on these witnesses, "the less the possibility of excusing or overlooking his criminal and immoral course . . . his high standing and professional reputation vastly increased his usefulness to the Communist party." Thus the Trial Committee Report conclusively proves what it unshakeably assumes.

To a Trial Committee operating in this febrile and haunted frame of reference, the claim of "conscience" is naturally infuriating. McGill "claimed," it complains, "that his 'conscience' barred disclosure except by consent; and that, for all he knew, such persons had not done anything wrong or harmful." Even if it could be believed, the report says at another point, "that kind of a 'conscience' cannot be entrusted with teaching Philosophy at Hunter College." By this standard neither could a Socrates or a Kant.

Defense of Free Speech Subversive?

So frantic is the Trial Committee in its search for some kind of evidence to rebut the claim of past membership that it even cites McGill's signature in 1948 of a statement defending the rights of the Jefferson School "in which statement," says the Trial Committee report, "was the declaration: 'We believe that every group, including Marxists, has the right under the American Constitution to teach and propagate its ideas'." Well, don't they?

Weisner, after 27 years of teaching, has applied for retirement. McGill and Hughes will appeal. The Feinberg law bars members of the Communist party from teaching in New York State. The appeal will determine whether those who claim past membership can only prove their *bona fides* by acting as informers. It will also determine whether these cases are to be governed by normal rules of evidence, or by occult insights and esoteric suspicions.

The Hunter college cases, like the Oppenheimer case [he, too, was criticized for exercising "private judgment" when qustioned by the secret police] reflects a changing America, acquiescing in the extension to secular affairs of Catholic dogma hostile to individual conscience. American youth is being taught by these painful brain-washings of a whole generation that is the part of wisdom to obey, to swallow doubts, to conform and to save one's own skin when necessary at the expense of one's friends.

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that the evening before he had dined "with an American colleague attached to the U.S. Embassy in Paris." By thus linking himself with the Embassy, according to the account in *L'Express*, M. Dides made it possible for certain French papers, soon to be echoed abroad, to print the report that the Mendès-France government was destroying an anti-Communist network and was attacking an American intelligence service.

The informer on whom M. Dides relied, M. Baranès, made contact with the French Sûreté at the end of 1950. "M. Baranès opened his heart," according to *L'Observateur*, to officials there. "Of course, he was a Communist. But a national Communist. He led an opposition group which was Marxist but not Russian." He wanted to organize a network of saboteurs to operate in the event of a Russian occupation. He accepted 200,000 francs a month for expenses. He regularly delivered the minutes of the Politbureau of the Communist party. M. Brune, then Minister of the Interior, could not resist the pleasure of contact with this "bon Francais." But a successor complained that all M. Baranès furnished for 200,000 francs could be obtained for 15 francs by buying *Figaro* which runs a feature called "What *L'Humanité* Is Hiding From Its Readers." M. Dides was switched to the Prefect of Paris, M. Baylot, and by the latter to M. Dides.

Whether M. Baranès was a double (or possibly) triple agent remains to be seen. The energetic investigation launched by Mendès-France is likely not only to determine the source of "leaks" but the men and forces who hoped to use these leaks to smear the French government in American eyes and to destroy the one man who, after the procession of mediocre nonentities in power since de Gaulle, really promises France a New Deal.

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The New Soviet Proposals on Germany and Nuclear Inspection

The Negative Factors in the London Agreement

We in this country have been so blinded by propaganda, our commentators have become such trained seals, that we may find it impossible objectively to assess the negative factors in the German arms agreement on which Molotov counts in the giant diplomatic duel his East Berlin speech opened last week.

From the German point of view, the negative factors are obvious. The most important is that the London agreement envisages the continued occupation of the Reich until the end of this century. The Germans are offered a kind of fire sale sovereignty—until 1998 they will be "free," but British, French and American troops will remain on their territory, with the reserved right of intervention against "subversion," with extensive powers of inspection to enforce limits on arms production, and a "voluntary" German promise to forswear atomic, bacteriological and chemical warfare. It is this which explains the cool reception given Adenauer in Bonn on his return from London.

Americans do not realize that while Germans are divided on whether to rearm, they are overwhemingly in favor of reunifying their country. A rearmed West Germany will bring a full rearmed East Germany, and that threatens a new and greater Korea in the heart of Europe.

It is the fear of becoming another, bigger and bloodier Korea, plus the obvious common sense of the suggestion, which explains the failure of the Germans to react against the Dehler proposal. Thomas Dehler, chief of the right wing Free Democrats, the second largest party in the Adenauer coalition, proposed that as the price of unification the Germans even accept "un-free" elections in the East zone. He contends that an all-German parliament could easily "digest" a minority of Communist delegates so elected.

Not much less obvious, if one permits oneself open-eyed examination are the negative aspects for the Western powers. The British are faced with the prospect of keeping four divisions in Germany for the rest of the century at the cost of about 100,000 pounds a year. The French recall the paper promises and the inspection system of the Versailles agreement. Both are faced with the prospect of a "little arms race" in that uncomfortable "little Europe" as they keep pace with German arms expansion. The nonsense about arming the Germans to protect Western Europe becomes clear when we look and see that the British are pledged to keep troops on the Continent for a half century to protect France against the rearmed Germans!

Free To Do Anything We Pleased

The complex provisions of the London agreements reflect fear of Germany, not fear of Russia. The safeguard against Russian expansionism is American power, not a rearmed West Germany. To rearm the one dissatisfied power on the Continent is not to insure peace but to insure war. The British and French have gone along on this because they could not afford to antagonize the U.S. and lose the dollars they still need. This is the reality behind the contrived chorus in our press about how this was a purely European agreement. Dulles left Eden and Mendès-France free to make any agreement—if it were an agreement to rearm the Germans.

To exploit these negative factors Molotov has more time than most American newspaper readers realize. The London agreements are only "in principle." The details are yet to be worked out and the pacts ratified. The French will vote in November, but Adenauer must talk with them about the Saar first in October. The future of this territory, which will determine the balance of power in iron and steel between Germany and France, must be settled first to French satisfaction. In England, the vote for German rearmament at the Labor party conference (the *Economist* of Oct. 2 calls it a victory "as thin as a wood shaving"), shows how divided the British remain. Here, of course, no one dares think on the subject. German rearmament is a sacred dogma, our own American "party line."

Against this background, Molotov's willingness to discuss free elections and Vishinsky's willingness to accept the principle of continuous inspection to enforce nuclear disarmament represent a change in the Russian position which it will prove impossible to reject without exploration.

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